

Death of a Salesman

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the importance of dreams in *Death of a Salesman*.
2. 'Willy Loman is too naïve and superficial a character to be the hero of a tragedy.' Discuss.
3. 'He had all the wrong dreams. All, all wrong.' Discuss in relation to Willy in *Death of a Salesman*.
4. To what extent is *Death of a Salesman* about 'the inside of a man's head'?
5. Discuss Miller's use of symbols and motifs in *Death of a Salesman*.
6. What is the importance of the relationships between fathers and sons in *Death of a Salesman*?
7. Miller has said that *Death of a Salesman* is 'really a love story between a man and his son, and in a crazy way between both of them and America.' Do you agree with this statement?
8. Write about Linda's role in the play.
9. What do you think Arthur Miller is trying to say about 'success' and the American Dream in *Death of a Salesman*? Is he using the story of Willy to put across a message?
10. Discuss the significance of the title 'Death of a Salesman'. What is the importance of selling in the play?
11. Write a commentary on the Requiem showing what it adds to the play and discussing what you feel about it as an ending.
12. Write a film review of the film version of *Death of a Salesman* directed by Volker Schlöndorff in 1985.
13. What is interesting about Miller's handling of time and memory in the play? What does this add to your understanding of the characters?
14. Write an essay about any character/ relationship in the play which you find particularly interesting.
15. 'Biff's rejection of Willy's ideas is the climax of his self-discovery.' Discuss.
16. What is the importance of the flashback scenes in the play?
17. 'Willy's image of America is a mistaken one: it is no longer the land of opportunity but a concrete jungle.' Discuss.
18. What is the function of sound and music in the play?
19. 'Willy's death shows that the American dream is a phoney dream.' Discuss.